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The Incoherence Of Coherence

MAUREEN HORAK

Yesterday I came across an upsetting piece of scientific information. It was printed on an innocuous looking sheet of white paper—no labels such as "classified," "secret," or "attention," stamped across the top. In fact, there was not even a solitary well-placed exclamation point to warn the reader that the content of the paper did not match the form. While reading this information, which I have a positive duty to pass along to you, try to relax. If your favorite clergyman or psychoanalyst is not in his office, I suggest you keep an envelope addressed to Dear Abby close by.

The title of the paper was *Barnyard Language.** Dull enough, I thought, to be safe, informative reading for a time-filler between appointments. So I sat down in the swivel chair, placed my feet on the desk, put my glasses on my nose, and plunged into what I imagined would be a rhapsodic praise of the rooster's crow at dawn, or a touching essay on the counterpoint caroled by the horse, chicken, rooster, and cow. I was mistaken.

Perhaps you will not be as innocent a reader as I was. Anything that has the word "language" in its title should have immediately come under my suspicion. I have had to cut my hair quite short recently as a result of the unsightly knots I had twisted in it while comparing one small Chinese sentence with its English translation.

Certain wise men in China have claimed that a white horse is not a horse. Certain wise men in America, my esteemed father for

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* "O Iazyke Domashnikh Ptits i Zhivotnykh," *Vedomosti*, Vol. 1 (October, 1966), p. 5.

example, have claimed that a white horse is indeed a horse. Now in Chinese one would not say "a white horse is not a horse," but rather "white horse is not horse." Now this does clear the problem up to a certain extent, but only to a certain extent.

The fact remains that if in China I were to ask for a white horse in my best Chinese, flashing a check for five hundred dollars, I would not be given a horse. Neither, if I were to ask for a white horse in America, would I be given a horse,—but only because I'm a dependent and my mother has a bad case of hay fever and my father has a bad case of bankruptcy. Casting aside these hindrances, if I asked for a white horse in America, I would be given a horse.

Now if I were in China I don't know if I'd get a white rabbit or rat (I admit I've never been there), but words show I'd never get a horse. The thought of paying five hundred dollars for a white mouse and housing it in a stable does not upset me too much; I must say I've always tried to understand other cultures as much as possible. It does seem, however, that China would have a bit of a problem joining the Common Market. I can imagine De Gaulle's pique when a military order for 20,000 white horses from China turned out to be 20,000 white doves. What really upsets me, and, I must confess, makes me exceedingly jealous, is the knowledge that a Chinaman can dream about white horses that are not horses, whereas I can only dream about white horses that *are* horses.

Now I think you can perhaps see why I should have reached for a tranquilizer or whiskey sour when I read the title *Barnyard Language*. I should have known that I would once again be twisting my hair. I hope that I have warned you enough about the volatile contents of the paper to spare you from shock.

The point of the paper was, that various groups of animals around the world have been developing their own national languages. Now it is one thing for an American to say a white horse is a horse and a Chinaman to say a white horse is not a horse; but for an English rooster to say "kuk e dudle du," a German rooster to say "kikiriki," a Turkish rooster to say "koko-riko," a Dutch rooster to say "kuke-luku," and a Russian rooster to say "ku-ka-re-ku," is, I'm sure both Chinese and Americans would agree, a horse of a different color.

I'm afraid the animals, those poor helpless creatures that we have deigned to domesticate, are getting out of hand. Animals in their efforts to be like man, probably do not see the widespread consequences their rebellious attitudes may have—that they are

threatening their international understanding. Their finest literary traditions in the spirit of *Aesop's Fables* and *Winnie-the-Pooh* will be reduced to dull semantic themes about American crows complaining of the incomprehensibility of Chinese crows. The animals will turn into patriotic creatures flaunting their linguistic talents, national flags, and national armies with pride. International wars will be unavoidable. The day French cows are seen sporting little blue flags between their horns, and Canadian cows bearing white ones, all their hopes for international understanding are doomed. The animals with their languages will become organized, supersensitive, and easily insulted. If this revolt is allowed to continue, the animals may develop such strength that they will even turn against (I hate to say it) man.

It has long been suspected that animals were developing national languages; I'm afraid, in our fear, we have been sublimating the information. It's time to face cold, hard, scientific facts. To show you the widespread results of the rebellion, here are some concrete examples: English pigs are now saying "oink, oink," German pigs "kvik, kvik," Italian pigs "fron, fron," French pigs "snef, snef," and Russian pigs "khru, khru." Of course, pigs are noted for their stubborn nature; but research has proved that even the sheep have dared to develop their own national languages. German sheep are saying "mz mmz," Italian sheep "bih biih," Turkish sheep "mmi mmi," English sheep "ba-a," and Russian sheep "b-be-ee." This crisis is even more serious when you realize that the animal most particularly blessed by man's friendship has joined the rebellion. German dogs are saying "vow, vow," English dogs "bow wow," French dogs "va va," Russian dogs "arf arf," and Italian dogs "bu bu."

If the animals are allowed to keep up this charming but dangerous prattle, the computers may follow their example. Someone once said that a little rebellion is a good thing. I must say this is a well-meaning and worthy thought, but only if it's kept in the family.

The Children Of Steel

The Bessemer Process children
live in a grey world
and endure like thistles with spiked heads.

Their forms silhouette against an endless twilight day
as an exhaust flame from the mill furnace flickers
in the thick air of the sky.

Their fathers carry black lunchpails
to their jobs of feeding fires
and sparking soft metals
Until the molten iron,
sizzling and snapping,
is converted into a hard substance.

The children of steel
run down grey pavement grass
With blackened lungs,
an inherited trademark
of progress and determination.

FRANCES MATHAY

The Cat

MATILDA TODD

I used to go direct from school over to Grandpa's store: most days he'd sit out front there with me, and tell me stories about his growing up. And I'd howl and beg for one more. Some of them he told me over and over again, but no matter how many times I'd heard them they always got funnier. Sometimes Lizzy or someone else would come with me, but they were scared of Grandpa 'cause he had a terrible temper. Take the time that lady kept coming with a twenty-dollar bill for seventeen cents worth of gas. Grandpa started off with twenty dollars worth of change every morning, and three mornings in a row she took all his change. So after the third morning he counted out nineteen-hundred and eighty-three pennies and put them in a paper sack. Next morning he waited for that woman. Sure enough here she came—if she hadn't we'd have had to bury Grandpa for sure!—but here she came and ordered her seventeen cents worth of gas. And he gave her the sack and a good cussin'. I guess he won his case—she never came back for gas, anyway.

On days like that you didn't fool with Grandpa. We'd sit in front of the store all right, but neither of us talking much. It was one of those days, so all-fired hot that the two nigger children didn't come for their licrish sticks and Grandpa scowled at the sun and it scowled right back. Then—he saw it the same time I did—stalkin' across the road, boldly considering Grandpa's mood, a big ole Tom Cat. His size was all bones; we could count every one. His tail had a crook at the end like a walkin' cane. He'd been scrounging for a meal at the dump downaways.

I didn't take much offense at the creature and I reckoned it was just a kind of idle grumpiness that made Grandpa pick up the rusty can and sling it behind the cat's legs. He was off down the road. We were quiet again.

It was just as hot the next day and I was thinking more about the fly on my leg than the cat. The silence exploded when Grandpa

yelled, *"It's my property and you git off it!"* The cat was slinking back again—until Grandpa flung the largest rock he could find and hit him—we thought.

Supper was hard, like any time Grandpa was mad at somebody. And I knew where his mind was from his mumblings. Afterwards he took the rifle from under his bed and loaded it.

When I came from school, the gun was on the bench out front of his store like I knew it would be. But I didn't think that cat would be back for it—no animal in its right mind was gonna just *ask* for trouble that way. We didn't even have to wait long, though, before we spotted a crooked tail moving through some rubbish and over toward the store. And without a word this time, Grandpa aimed his gun and shot him. It was like he'd killed the devil himself. "Got him!" he grinned at me. Well yeah, I reckoned so with a 22 rifle. He told the whole family, too—and I saw a funny look on Len's face when he heard.

I found out about it later. Sure it was a good trick, but not at all the kind you pulled on Grandpa. Len was older, and he thought it'd be a real joke—and as he swore me not to tell, I figured I'd go along.

The cat was still out there on the ground, 'cause Grandpa sure didn't feel like fooling with it any more. It was dead all right, and mangled too, but it was dirty and matted enough before, so we knew Grandpa couldn't see the difference, especially from the store. We put a stick into the ground and laid the cat up next to it. And the further we stepped back and kinda squinted our eyes the more he looked as real as he had the day before.

I told Len Grandpa was gonna suspect at him hangin' around the store that afternoon, but he said he wasn't gonna miss any fun. Grandpa was hardly noticing anything—he felt just fine—but as he leaned back in his chair and glanced across the yard he saw something that made his eyes get wide and then narrow like slats. It took him a while to say anything. "That fool cat! I'll fix him so he'll never come back!" He ran into the store and loaded a shot gun and without more than a second's aim he blasted the cat. And this time he didn't just leave him on the ground. He took the pieces across the road and dug a hole a foot deep. And after burying the animal, I guess to make sure, he put two huge rocks on top. "I figure he's dead." I couldn't think of anything to say. Len may have counted on telling him some day, but he never did. 'Course Grandpa wasn't doing much laughing about it then. Anyway, seeing as how Grandpa loved a good story, I spec' he'd laugh as hard as any at my telling you about it now.

A Ministerial Call

JEANNE SIMMS

The doorbell rang. She heard it muffled through the pillow. It rang several minutes, then stopped. She nearly dozed off, and then again the ringing.

"Oh, hell," she said, tumbling limply out of bed. Her dark hair fell in streaks on the mint green negligee. The clock read nine-thirty. A blah time, she thought, slicking her hair back as she searched for a robe. On the chair lay the dress she had worn last night, and a crumpled girdle with limp stockings still attached to the garters. Her beige slip was in a puddle on the floor where she'd stepped out of it. The robe—where was it? She passed a mirror and frowned at the sleepy reflection in it. By the time she found the robe the bell rang again.

"I'm coming, I'm coming!" she muttered, gathering the folds about her.

The marble corridor was cold to her bare feet. She concentrated on the coldness without wondering who rang the bell. In the hall she passed a delicate mohogany table with slender legs. Through the tiny windows that framed the door she saw the sun. Taking a

deep breath she reached for the cold brass knob.

"Joanne, may I come in?"

She gasped as if she'd been bolted awake by lightning, "Yeats—what in the world!"

"Heard you flew in last night, and just wanted to come by and see if there's anything Nancy or I could do . . ."

She ran her fingers through her hair unconsciously as if they were a comb.

"Come in. Yes, come in."

"It *is* sort of early—just finished a call at the hospital, and I figured the rest of the world's been up for hours, like me," he said, with a laugh in his voice. He wanted to see her smile.

She tried a laugh, but it was a vague one. He was vague. Since she'd been back in Windcliff nothing had crystalized.

"Sit down," she said, leading him to the large impressive living room, "and excuse me while I slip on a dress . . . then how 'bout some coffee? After all, what would your congregation say if they knew you visited half-decent divorcées before noon?"

"Suit yourself," he laughed, and picked up a copy of *Life*. The cold sterility of the room was overpowering. Things were too immaculate, too thoroughly dusted. As he compared it to the comfortable family room in the manse, it reminded him of the model rooms you see in the windows of furniture stores. Nancy's homemade slip covers cocked on the chairs couldn't be in the same world with this stately mustard-colored brocade couch.

"Joanne, I'm glad you're here—thought you'd be out galavanting around town catching up on the latest gossip!"

"Yeats, what do you *mean?*" she shouted from the bedroom. "As far as Windcliff's concerned, *I* am the latest gossip!"

He hadn't anticipated her remark. "People forget, Joanne."

"Yes people do forget—people like Steve always forget," she said, appearing in the doorway with two cups of coffee. She wore a pale blue shift, her shoulder-length hair contained by a yellow ribbon in a soft pony tail. Yeats took a cup of coffee from her, and then she slipped into a golden armchair across from him.

"Have you heard from him?" Yeats asked.

"No—not a letter. Is the coffee hot enough?"

"Hmmm—yes, fine," he said, hunching up and lowering his head to the white fluted cup.

"You said you were at the hospital. Who's been sick?"

"Oh—some youngsters had a car accident last Saturday night, coming back from New York State with beer."

"No one badly hurt, I hope."

"Terry Walls got a broken nose, that's all. Lucky kids!—could've been lots worse. Promised his mother I'd threaten a little fire and brimstone."

Joanne grinned, "You're the one to preach fire and brimstone? Good Lord, Yeats, you made more runs to New York State for beer than any other boy in high school!"

"That was twelve years ago," said Yeats, folding his hands behind his head, crossing his legs and grinning right back.

She hadn't recently thought of any past other than the last two confusing miserable years. It refreshed her now to picture Yeats in his white tennis sweater and white bucks; herself and her girl friends in outmoded felt skirts appliquéd with poodles or telephones.

Yeats hesitated and then said, "Do you remember—must have been end of my senior year, your sophomore year, we drove up for a celebration at *Scottie's Bar & Grill?*"

She leaned back, and smirked. It came to her vaguely.

"That was the night we all got so bombed—remember? We had to wait till three when it closed, so the bartender could drive us home," she said.

She pictured her bathrobe-clad father standing sternly at the door when she and Yeats swaggered bravely up the walk.

They both laughed. "Things like that grow funnier the farther away they get," she thought, gazing absently at her naked left hand.

A Reply

But still we reach . .
(more often than not)
And in the darkness
(that is always day)
Sometimes we find
(more often not)
Something . . .
And in a nonexistent pause
We lose our selves . . .
(but it is really finding)
And sometimes
(more often not)
The seed more precious than the loss
Survives, and grows, and means, and loves . . .

And in the darkness
(that is always day)
Sometimes we find
(more often than not)
Nothing . . .
And the seed withers, and dies
Through things forgotten,
(if ever they were known)
Not tended, understood, or seen . . .
(impossible to see)

But still we reach . . .
And if we touch thin air
We reach again
(more often than not)

URSULA ALEXANDER

Focus

We always sought and envied you. Your strong
And forward look wore cosmic dreams, and, wise
You wandered forth to heal men, rhapsodize
On books, or study stars—but not for long.
You turned the telescope to look at *you,*
And so destroyed our trust. You brooded, stirred
Up Lethe, native to the mind, and heard
"We're all alike, and low," and claimed it true.
Your cloudy mind, bound first by change and then
By gloom, thought life a mere experiment
In dust. If you could fight remorse, repent
Your fear with hope, you'd come to know: as men
We're free to turn the sights of thought or love,
So long as they are balanced from above.

JANE HOYME

Winter's Moon

SUE RUPPRECHT

Augusta tried to shut the front door quietly in an attempt to avoid her mother's shrill "Auguuusta, is that you?" She failed. She heard the board at the top of the stairs creak, and then it came: "Auguuusta, is that you?"

"Yes'm." Once she had said, "No, it's the bogey man," which was promptly followed by the wooden spoon's being taken down from its resting place in the kitchen. Mama didn't like "smart words," she had told Augusta.

"Don't put your coat down in the parlor," Mama continued. Augusta cringed. She had just about put her coat in the green armchair. Mama had spare eyes pasted in every room of the house, Augusta was sure. She always knew what anyone was doing, even when she was upstairs and the sinner downstairs. "Hang it in the kitchen," Mama added.

"Yes'm." Augusta sounded repetitious every day when she got home from school. In the first place, she was made to walk home with Mallory Carter who lived around the corner. Mallory was at an age when he was totally embarrassed to be seen with a girl, and especially someone too little to have classes on the second floor of the school building. Consequently, he always made Augusta heel about six feet behind him, so that it would appear that they weren't together. Often he wouldn't even grunt "bye" when he deposited her at her front walk. Augusta, therefore, arrived at home in a state of utter second grade humiliation. She sensed a difference between her house, where the first minutes home were utilized with "Yes, Mama," and Asa's house.

Asa lived in a great big house about a block away from the school, down by the stores, and had a brother who was one of Mallory's friends. Often Augusta and Mallory, having been granted permission that morning, would stop by after school. Asa's mother would greet them in the parlor, collect their coats, inquire about their day, and smile after them as they went upstairs to the playroom. Shortly after they'd started to play she'd frequently appear with a batch of fresh cookies and Cokes. Augusta was convinced that Asa's house must be the next thing to Heaven.

Augusta's momentary dream was interrupted by her mother's coming downstairs. Her arms were piled high with dirty laundry, and at the top of the pile were Augusta's Sunday shoes.

"Now look here, Missy," said Mama, "what's all this mud? I've told you before, when you tramped in the mud, to get it all off or to give me your shoes when you got home. I found these hid under the bed, and I don't like it one bit! You'll make your shoes crack, and you know good and well we can't get you new ones till spring!"

Augusta choked slightly, but she didn't say anything.

"Now run out in the back yard and get the children. We've got to go downtown for a bit."

"Can'ten I stay home, Mama? I just walked up that way," Augusta whined.

"Don't fuss, Augusta," Mama said sharply, "you got to learn to listen, and when I tell you we're goin' to do somethin', we're goin' to do it *right then,* and you don't have nothin' to say about it!"

Augusta walked out of the dim front parlor; Mama always kept the shades drawn so the dust from the tracks wouldn't show so fast. She walked through the kitchen and sniffed the aroma of cabbage, tonight's dinner in the making, and went out on the back stoop.

"Lewis, Charlie, Ramby," she called, "come inside this minute! Jackson, you and Roddy will have to go home 'cause we got to go away. Look at yourselves, all dirty!" Augusta spoke authoritatively. She assumed play responsibility for the younger children even though Lewis was two years older than she.

"Where we goin'?" Ramby shouted from her post in the middle of a pile of leaves. "I don't wanna go wherever it is!" She kicked the leaves, now dirty from the trains and shredded from having been played with for half a winter, and walked grudgingly toward Augusta. Her protest was silent; she knew about that spoon waiting in the kitchen to punish any open protest. "C'mon, Lewis, Augusta ain't gonna wait forever."

The four went into the kitchen where Mama was putting on her coat.

"Where we goin', Mama?" Charlie questioned. "We was just playin' good out back. Roddy and me was settin' up a store, and Lewis, he was makin' like a delivery man, and we wasn't botherin' Ramby none . . ."

"Hush up," Mama broke in. "I can't help it but we got to go down street. I'd leave you'uns here exceptin' that I know you'd be in trouble before I'd get out of the front gate. So you just come along—and I don't want any words out of you the whole time." She emphasized her feelings by abruptly lifting the lid off the kettle in which the cabbage was cooking and stirring it with great vigor. "Lewis, your hands is dirty, but it's no count to wash them, I reckon. Just come along."

"Mama, you still ain't said where we're goin'!" Charlie caught on to his mother's coat as if to halt the giant steps she was taking down the front walk. "I'd be like to think it was some surprise if'n I thought Daddy would be off work, but today's Monday and he's not home till late, ain't it so? I like to think of that time last year when we all came down and went to Aunt Louise's for supper."

"They ain't no surprise today, Lewis. Now just keep quiet and come along. I've got business of a sort that wouldn't interest you. You wouldn't understand it." Mama didn't smile, though her voice was softer. The lack of smile didn't surprise Lewis. Most folks didn't smile unless they got somethin' new they liked.

"There's Asa's house, Mama!" Augusta ran from the rear of the ranks to guide the tour past her friend's house. "Ain't it a fine house? Do you think we could stop in there on our way home?"

"You and Mallory can stop tomorrow, Augusta. We don't have time. Careful when you cross this street." Mama led them through the intersection by Asa's house and into the business district, a few stores and restaurants serving the hundreds of houses that ran up and downhill between the shirt factory and the tracks. They stopped in front of the *White Star Grill,* and Augusta thought of the time Asa's mother had taken them in there for supper one night. "Why are we here, Mama? Are we havin' supper here?" She tried to take her mother's hand, but Mama wasn't looking at Augusta. She was peering up and down the street, and she looked funny to Augusta, as if she couldn't see anything but what she saw in line with her tall eyes. She didn't even see Charlie punch Ramby.

"Hush, Ramby. Folks'll look at you," Mama said tensely. "Augusta, get her to stop cryin'. Here comes the man."

Augusta looked up at her mother. "What man, Mama?"

Her mother didn't have time to reply. Augusta had seen the man somewhere, probably just on the street. She had seen most of the

people around here on her way to and from school with Mallory. She recognized his overcoat because it was long, and he wore the collar turned up around his face. He was one of the few white folks who ever came around there.

"Afternoon, Miz Rollins. Mighty glad to see you here. Your old man's been kind of avoidin' me these days. You know, I told him he'd have to pay me double if he didn't get it to me by Saturday, and this is Monday. That makes it . . . let me see . . . forty-four dollars."

Augusta, who didn't have to do much to quiet Ramby when the stranger came up to Mama, stared at him.

"These your children?" he looked at Mama.

"Yes Sir," Mama answered, glancing around at them.

"You'd think Mister Rollins would take more care with his debts. Double that twenty-two dollars he borrowed and you take shoes away from these kids." He looked down at Augusta, then at Lewis who was glaring at him from around the corner at the *White Star* entrance. Charlie had taken to swinging around a parking meter and was unaware of the whole situation.

"He couldn't help it none," Mama said pleadingly. "He got laid off three weeks and couldn't get work nowheres—that factory told them they wouldn't get work—fifteen-hundred of them was laid off then. They said they was puttin' in new machines, but you know they could do somethin' down there like help put them in or somethin'."

"That's all right, Miz Rollins," the man assured her. "He's back now. Have you got the money?" He sounded hurried.

"Yes sir, it's all here." Mama fumbled around in her coat pocket and brought out a roll of bills.

"Let's see," said the man, as he licked his finger—"ten, twenty, thirty, forty, one, two, three, four. Sure enough—it's all here. Now you tell Mister Rollins that if he ever needs me again, he knows where to find me. Good day!" He tipped his hat to Mama. Augusta thought only gentlemen who lived up on Hillcrest did that to the ladies they passed going into the grocery. So Augusta guessed he must be a gentleman.

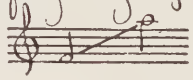
This composition, reprinted by the kind permission of Mr. Richard Bunger, was selected to be performed at the Twelfth Annual Symposium of American Music at the University of Redlands, Redlands, California.

JIUTA (1967)

MUSIC BY RICHARD BUNGER

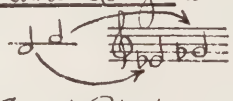
HAIKU translated by PETER BEILENSON*

S.R. Soprano Recorder sounds one octave higher than written and should have Baroque fingering system.

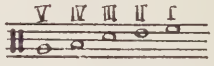
V. Vocal Soloist with range: 

1.,2.,3.,4. Four Part Choir (SSAA, SATB, TTBB, etc.). "S" indicates Speech with rhythm, dynamics and inflection. "W" indicates a Stage Whisper.

P.G. Piano Gongs are two "prepared" notes on a Grand Piano:



G♭: Place Thick Felt 7⅞" from Damper between strings 1-2.
Place Bamboo Slit 3¼" " " " " 2-3.
E♭: Place Soft Plastic 2¼" from Damper between strings 1-2.
Place Bamboo Slit 6¼" " " " " 2-3.

T.B. Temple Blocks are played with rubber mallets: 

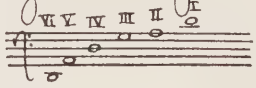
F.C. Finger Cymbal is struck with a small brass rod.

S.D. Small Drum is played with fingers and hands.

M.D. Medium Drum and

L.D. Large Drum } are played by a single performer with felt mallets.

G. Guitar is played with a pick always near the bridge;

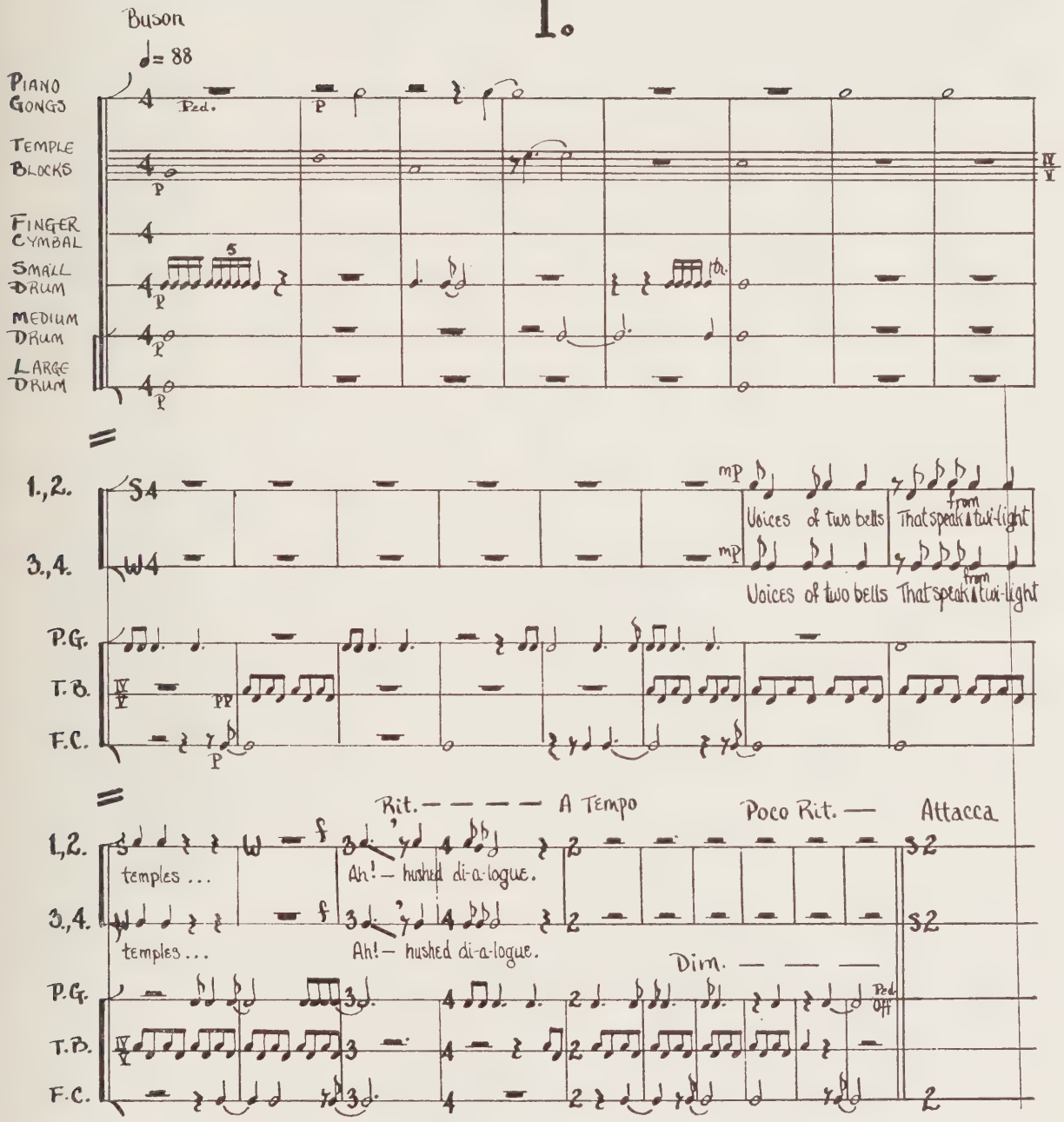
Scordatura: 

; sounds as written.

* used with kind permission of Edna Beilenson

C.B.

I.

1.

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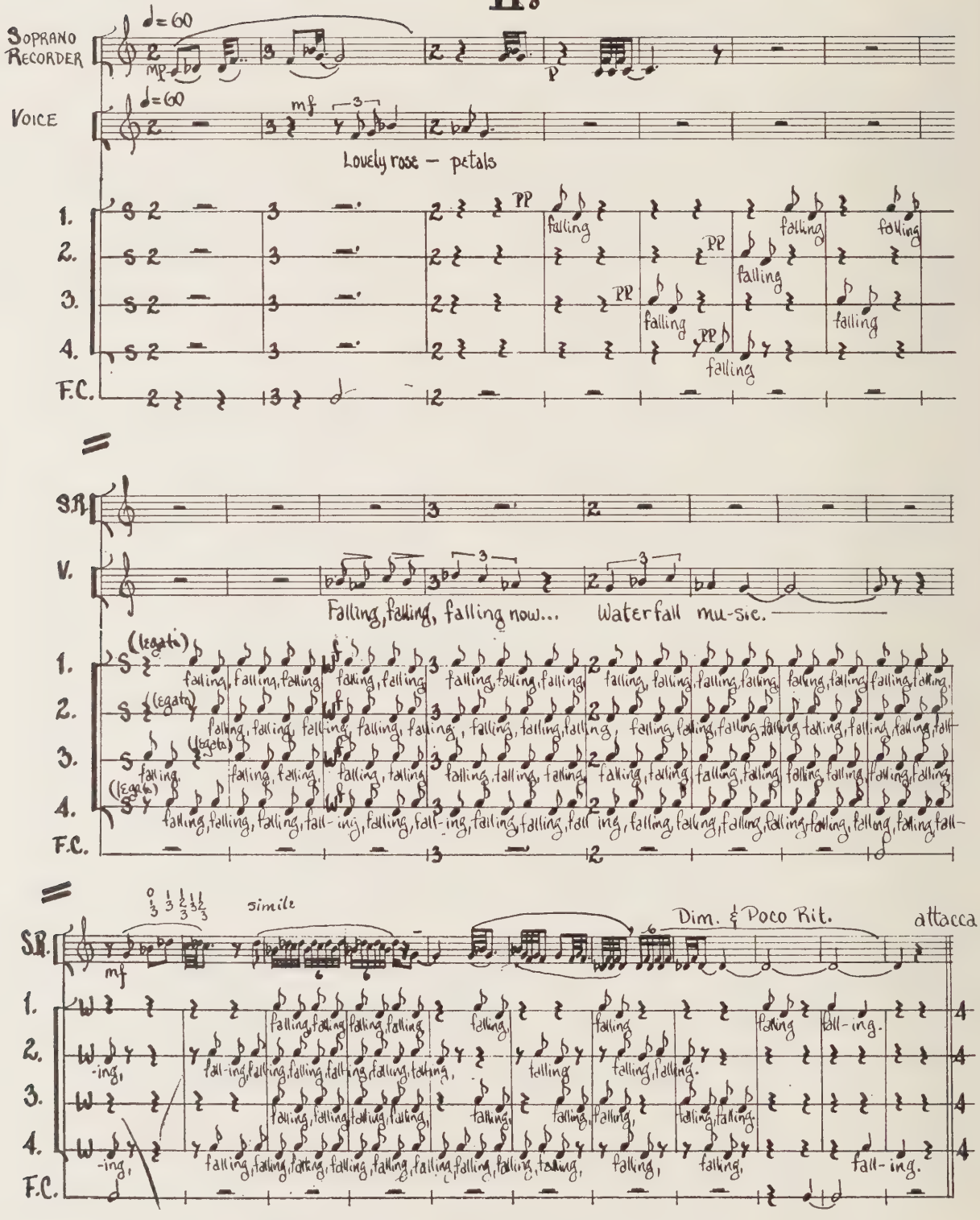
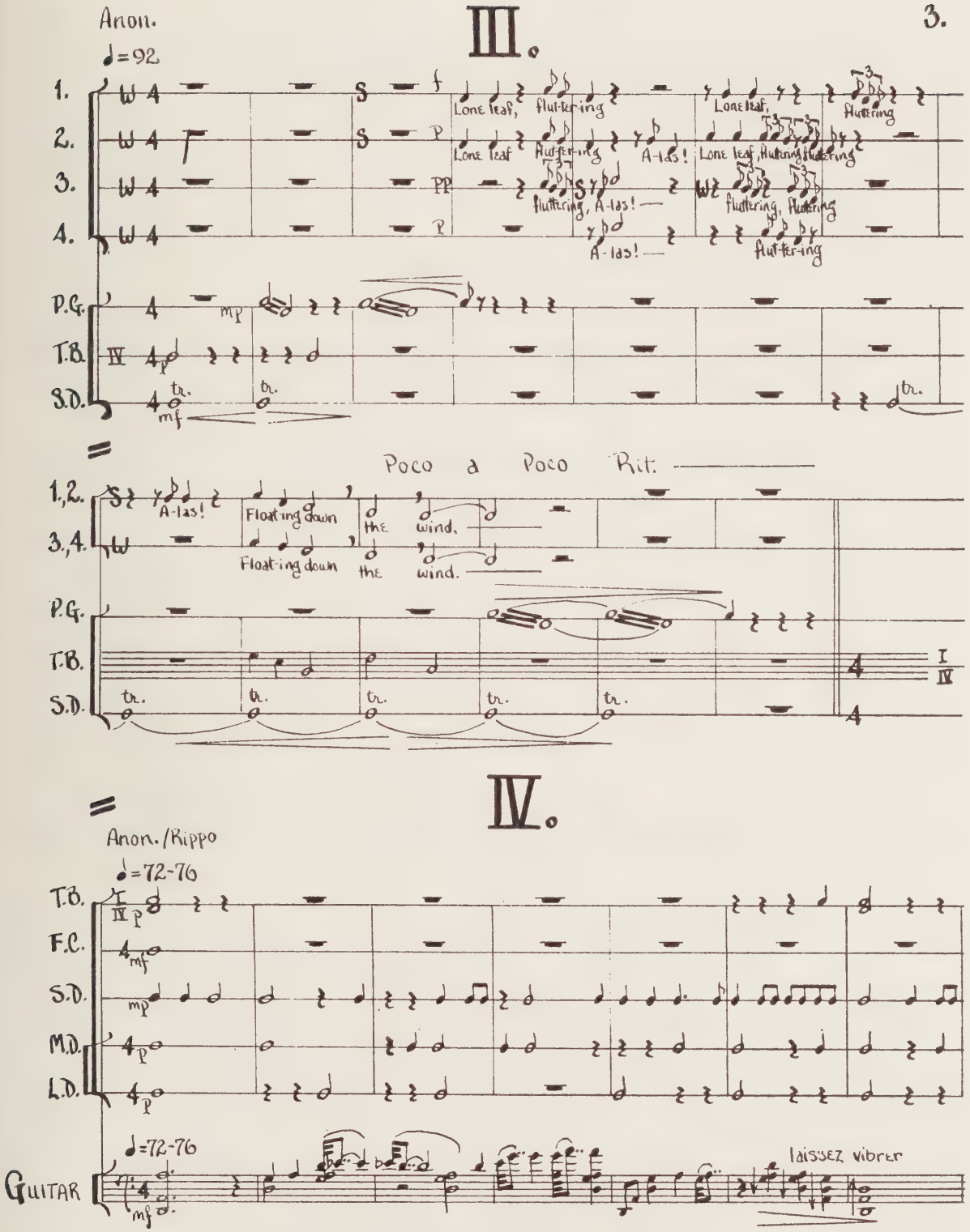
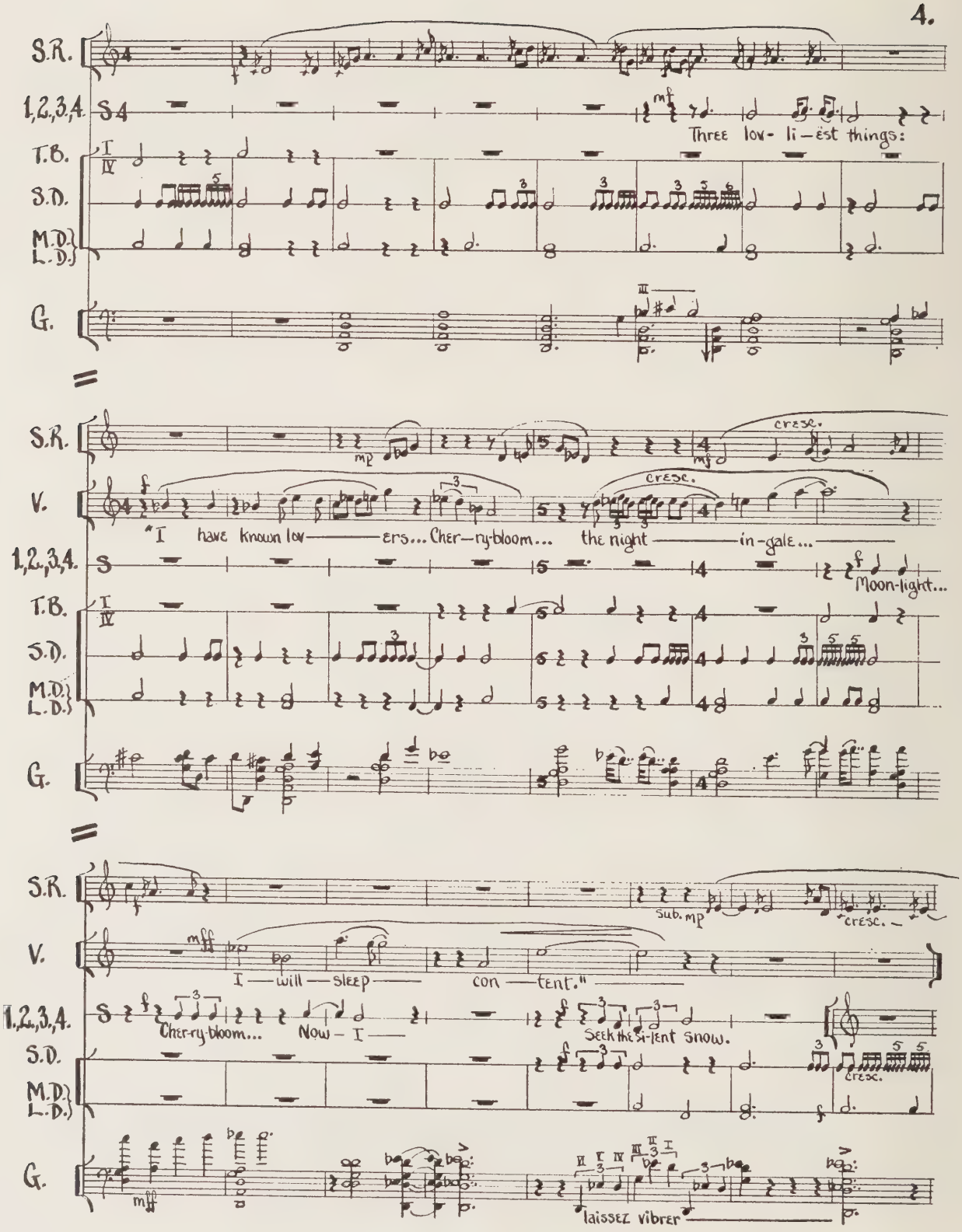
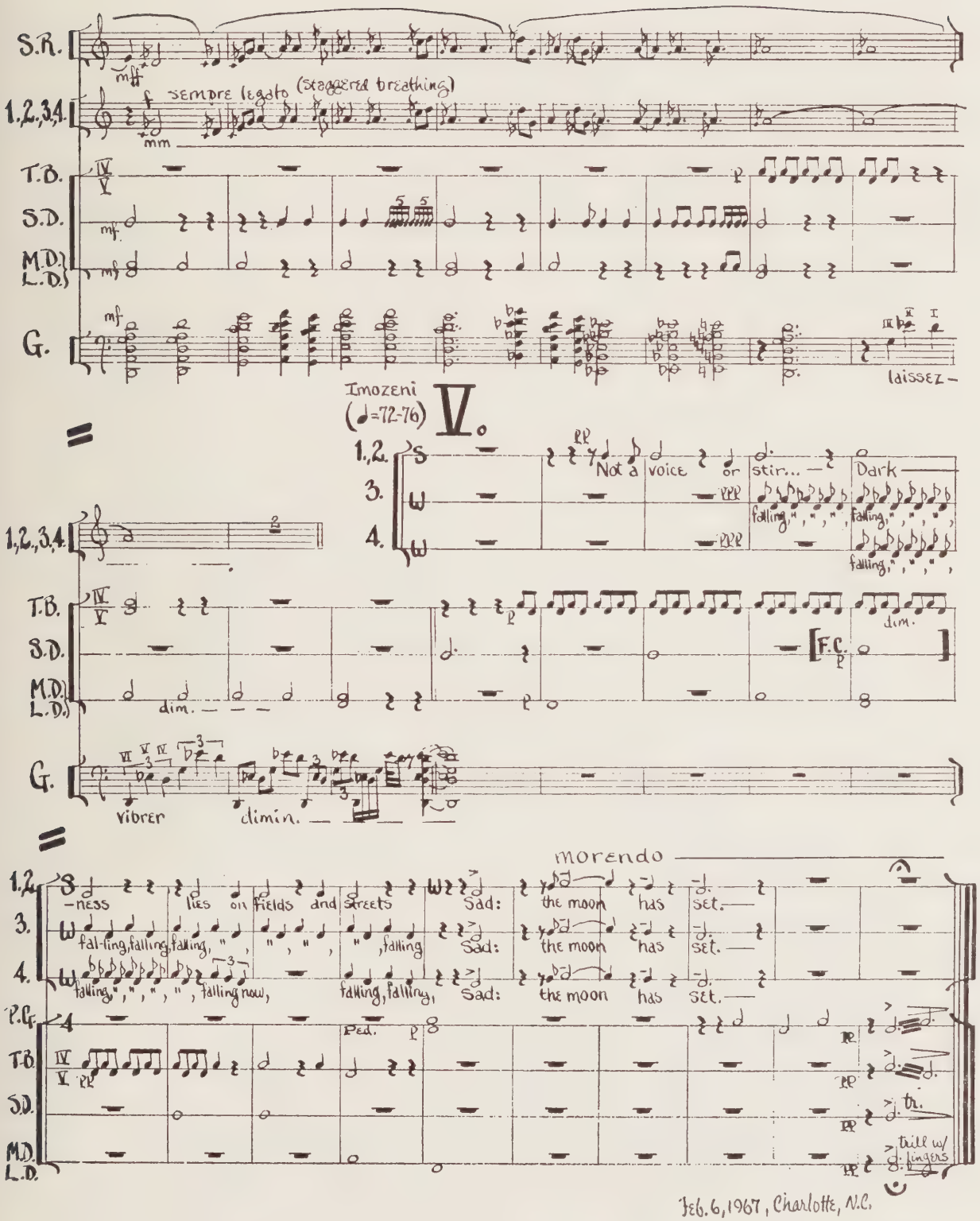
Basho

II.

Soprano Recorder
Voice
♩=60
mp
mf
p
Lovely rose – petals
1.
2.
3.
4.
F.C.
PP
falling
S.R.
V.
Falling, falling, falling now... Waterfall mu-sic.
(legato)
falling, falling, falling, fall-ing,
simile
Dim. & Poco Rit.
attacca
fall-ing.


Anon.
III.
♩=92
1.
2.
3.
4.
P.G.
T.B.
S.D.
Lone leaf, flut-ter-ing
A-las!
Fluttering, A-las!
Lone leaf, Fluttering, Fluttering
Fluttering, Fluttering
Flut-ter-ing
Poco a Poco Rit.
1.,2.
3.,4.
Floating down the wind.
IV.
Anon./Rippo
♩=72-76
F.C.
M.D.
L.D.
GUITAR
laissez vibrer


S.R.
1,2,3,4.
T.B.
S.D.
M.D.
L.D.
G.
Three low- li—est things:
V.
"I have known low——ers... Cher—ry-bloom... the night——in-gale...
Moon-light...
I——will——sleep——con——tent."
Cher-ry-bloom... Now—I——
Seek the si-lent snow.
laissez vibrer

S.R.
1.2.3.4.
sempre legato (staggered breathing)
T.B.
S.D.
M.D.
L.D.
G.
laissez-
Imozeni
(♩=72-76)
V.
Not a voice or stir... Dark
falling, , , , , ,
dim.
F.C.
vibrer
dimin.
morendo
-ness lies on fields and streets Sad: the moon has set.
fal-ling, falling, falling, , , , , , , falling Sad: the moon has set.
falling, , , , , falling now, falling, falling, Sad: the moon has set.
P.G.
Ped.
tr.
trill w/ fingers
Feb. 6, 1967, Charlotte, N.C.

Fat Canary

MAUREEN HORAK

It rains real hard around here in Spring; and when it rains, Nancy wears this giant yellow raincoat. She comes clomping in our living room, throws her books on the table, and says something dumb to me like, "It's raining outside; you'd better wear your boots." She's always saying things like that when Mother's around. Mother says it's because she's trying to be nice, but I know it's because she thinks that's the way ladies talk. She thinks Mother's a lady.

You'd never catch Mother saying stupid things like "pitchforks" or "spring showers" to talk about rain. She puts her hands on her cheeks, looks out the window and says something like "Blick, it's raining." I like to watch her say "blick"—it's one of her made-up words. She taught me how to say it. You pull your mouth down at the sides and let the noise come out slow and thick. Then when the sound is finished, you let the corners of your mouth come up real fast and you're smiling.

My Mother's not a lady. I asked her once. She closed her eyes a little—they're nice and green like our cat's—and said, "No, I'm not a lady—I'm not old enough." Then she said in a big floaty voice, "I'm Princess Azmarelda with long red hair, and Princess Azmareldas with long red hair are *never* ladies." Mother's not really a princess, but she does have long red hair, so she's not a lady, just like she said.

That's why Nancy's dumb. She acts snooty sometimes because she thinks my Mother's a lady like her Mother and she wants to be like them. She even likes to wear lipstick; she pretends it won't

wash off after we play dress-up. But she does funny things when she's not trying to be big. One time she showed me how to make lemonade out of these little pink pills her Mother threw out. We put lots of sugar in and sold it for five cents a glass. Nancy's pretty. She has big round cheeks and yellow hair that goes in little frizzles when it rains. She lives next door to me; she's my best friend.

This morning it rained. Rain makes me mad. If I could tell it when to start and when to stop, I'd like it; if it wouldn't just rain around whenever it feels like it. Nancy and I were walking to school. She had on that giant yellow raincoat. It has a hood, and she likes the rain anytime because she gets to wear that raincoat. I hate her when she wears it. She looks like a canary,—a fat one.

I was walking slow listening to the rain go "plink" when it fell in the puddles on the road. Nancy was saying something about missing the school bus. She thinks catching the bus is very important. I don't mind missing it—that means I don't have to listen to Harry Harrison, the creepy bus driver. When I walk by him he tries to pinch me and calls out, "Well, how's little missie today?" I have a secret name for him—Hairy the Ape.

We were walking faster to catch the bus. Then all of a sudden Nancy started crying. She stood in the middle of a puddle and kept making awful sounding gulps. Her face got red and I could tell she had to blow her nose.

"My Mother's a bitch!" she said. I didn't ask her what that was; she always says dumb things when she's trying to act like a lady. "I'm going to run away." It was sort of funny the way she said that. She swallowed between the words real hard. I asked where she was going. She said Mr. Lourigart's house. It was full of nice green pillows and apples on the tables. She was sure Mr. Lourigart would adopt her; he liked girls in the second grade. He said so.

By now we'd missed the bus. I turned to go home. Nancy stood still in the puddle; she didn't want to come. I walked down the street and kept counting the raindrops that dripped off the edge of my nose. My nose is spready like an Eskimo's. Nancy has a skinny nose that fits just right between her cheeks. She looked silly when she cried. I didn't like to watch her; that's why I left. I hate crying. You don't tell yourself to *start* crying but it happens anyway. Then, even if you get very mad and tell the tears to stop, they don't.

I sloshed over to the stone wall and sat on top of it. It looks out over a cornfield, and the stalks were all droopy and muddy. I felt sorry for them. I sat on the wall and thought about evaporation and condensation. That's about the only thing interesting we've

learned all year. I believe in evaporation and condensation, but I don't understand why the water doesn't get used up or just tired traveling from the clouds to the ground and back. The rain kept falling in big, hard drops. I began to get cold, so I went home.

I went in the kitchen to ask Mother why the water outside never got used up. There was Nancy the fat canary. Mother was hugging her. They didn't see me yet. They were talking about running away; they talk together a lot anyway. Mother was saying it would be stupid—Nancy should wait till she was in the third grade, because they don't sell bus tickets to you unless you're old, and your parents always come get you anyway. She said all it did was worry your parents and make them miss you. She called Nancy "baby."

I hate Nancy the fat canary. She stood there and said she didn't want to make her Mother worry—"That's babyish," she said. She sounded like her parrot. It talks like her Mother too; it says "D-e-a-r, *do* come in!" Nancy started crying again. Then Mother noticed I was there and told me to stop staring and go upstairs. I sat in my bedroom and thought about my Mother and the fat canary. I thought about evaporating and condensation and Mr. Lourigart. I wrapped my pink nightgown, toothbrush, and piggy-bank in a towel and went back to the kitchen to make a sandwich.

The fat canary was gone. I started to get out the peanut butter and Mother asked me what I was doing. "Running away," I said. Mother threw her head back and opened her mouth real wide, "Woof—*I* used to run away a lot when I was little. It's fun! Do you want some help? Here, I'll fix your sandwich." I stood there and watched her make it. I told her I wouldn't be back for a long time. She just asked me if I wanted to use her little suitcase. I said no. I decided not to tell her about Mr. Lourigart. She stood at the door and said, "Good-bye, sport. Too bad it's such a blicky day for running away!"

I'm sitting in Mr. Lourigart's living room right now. I told him I was Nancy Smith and I was running away, and a good friend told me he would let me spend the night at his house. Then I started crying and he patted my head and called me baby. He's tall and has on a skinny undershirt with great big armholes. He's on the phone in the kitchen right now. I just heard him say, "The poor child's freezing cold and crying." That's kind of funny. I hope Mother and the fat canary are happy.

Homo Sapiens?

FRANCES EUBANKS

It doesn't at all surprise *me,* if man unconsciously regards himself and his peers as somewhat less than homo sapiens. But as I sit here musing on the matter, I am amazed at how very often we humans liken our own to the appearances and habits of animals: "shrewd as a fox," or "vain as a peacock." Certain little words and familiar phrases absolutely sabotage our proper conception of ourselves as the rational beings we are. I mean, just because you're a dainty eater doesn't mean you "peck" at your food, does it?

I rather think our settings should help us remember who we are —builders of civilizations, maintainers of peace and order. Still, it's possible my boss may get upset in a perfectly rational environment. Why, I've seen him pad around in his gold-carpeted office on the tenth floor of our *Citizens Bank and Trust Building* without the skyline from his window calming his emotions in the least, or the perfectly well-regulated air-conditioning keeping him cool. He may suddenly turn to me, his own secretary, and "roar like a bear," or if more than usually upset—well, you know, in a "bull in a china shop" manner, really fuming—you guessed it—"like a lion." After that he'll be mad enough to take aggressive measures: to stop that order, resume production; to carry through, or whatever it was

that got his dander up in the first place! Under milder circumstances such men merely "bark"—and even "up the wrong tree," hard though that may be to do on the tenth floor of a building.

This subconscious infection of equating ourselves with our inferiors, however, doesn't exclude women. They run to bird equations, for some reason. I hardly ever hear a *man* referred to as a bird brain! Women have also been said to "chirp" when they speak, to "perch" when they sit on chairs (the woody straight ones especially), to quack, to hoot, to hiss, and more flatteringly, I suppose, even to purr.

Now I do think civilization has come far in teaching men and women to work and think together harmoniously. It is only rational that we should emphasize teamwork to accomplish our tasks. But why do we have to continue with antiquated phrases like "busy as beavers" that point to purely instinctual work motives? And then, as if we were simple no-minds, someone will be sure to come along while we're on a coffee break "to chew the fat" with us. Disgusting!

What? You don't agree with me? Talk about color in the language? I say color is nothing but a façade made of feathers and fur and fangs and I don't know what else.

Yes, yes, I have to be going too! Well, let's talk about it again some time. I'm sure I can make you understand what I mean. Yes, that's right—"you can lead a horse to water," but . . . Oh! what am I saying! Never mind. Yes, the work-load *is* just terrible nowadays; the truth is, I'm nearly at the end of my tether!

The Ole Pilot

MARY ANN BECK

"I always said I'd sell either of these two kids any day of the week—just meet the going price—five hundred million dollars. And if you can pay that, the price goes up another million!" This conventional dictum never fails to rouse a grey-green spark from the twinkling seriousness I have always watched in my father's eyes. Through the twenty years that I have been his daughter, I have never noticed a single physical change in him, except an occasional shift in weight. Whether brisking about in his thundercloud blue uniform with silver eagles perched proudly on both shoulders, or puttering around in a sport shirt and his infamous yellow linen slacks, Dad retains the dignified gruffness befitting an Air Force Colonel. (By the way, Mother and I both threw out those yellow slacks several times, only to have them retrieved by their unrelinquishing owner.)

Dad's gruffness has mellowed somewhat throughout the years, but his innate drive for perfection in himself and in others has never diminished in intensity. Ignorance and incompetence are inexcusable to him. How well I remember his inevitable comment on report card days: If I had a C, he wanted to know why it was not a B, and if perhaps I brought the grade up to a B on the next card, I was questioned about why it was not an A! ! Dissertations always followed on the pros minus the cons of making good grades. "Never made anything below a B in my life," he would say, "and your Mother only made one C—and that was in physics!"

On the ship enroute to Spain, our tour of duty from 1955 to 1958, Dad informed us all that the Beck family was to become proficient

in the native tongue in an extended grace period of four weeks. English was forbidden, and sign language frowned upon. Needless to say, the program was a fluent success, even for two-year-old Tommy who acquired a glib Spanish tongue long before he uttered an English syllable!

Programs and projects are the mainstays of a successful and efficient household. Whether in raking leaves, cleaning up the basement, fixing the curtain rods, hanging pictures or taking a trip, one has to program and re-program each detail with stringent efficiency. Dad is a "list-maker," and his projects cannot be executed properly until the "lists" are made. He has lists for next summer's projects, lists of last winter's unfinished projects and even lists for remembering other lists! Among his favorite "programs" are research projects in speculation about a certain purchase-to-be. The most recent was the search for a well-made, versatile yet economical slide projector. Mother had been complaining for years about our old one in which all the slides got stuck. As I recall, the project began in early June and ended in late November with the purchase of our new "Carosel" projector—which now, by the way, has been sitting in the closet for over three years because Dad is too tied up to deal with it, and it is supposed to be too delicate for the rest of us to touch! But the projector project was a relatively short one compared to the stereo and camera projects which covered time spans of eighteen and sixteen months respectively. When asked to comment on these, as he often is, Dad merely says: "Patience and common sense are two wonderful attributes."

I have often tried to remember such virtuous advice when meeting my date at the door, to the accompaniment of Dad vociferously singing *Ol' Man River* in the shower. I must admit, though, that even this is preferable to *Dad* meeting my date at the door with that immediately electrifying question: "Son, do you have seat belts in that car of yours?" By the time the interrogation is over and I am ready, I try to maneuver both of us out of the door before the second stage of the rocket fires with the well-known—"She's my only daughter and I don't want *my* daughter . . ." By the next day all is forgotten until the next time—except, of course, what time I came in the night before!

Dad has made a point of urging my brother Tom and me to invite our friends over to the house, and even though I am grateful, it has always made me a little sad inside, knowing that he wanted me to be proud to bring my friends to the home he never had when he was young. His father died when he was three, and he has helped support his mother since he was twelve. College days came, and

Dad went to night school when he could and worked during the day. During the war he became an Air Force pilot, and afterwards fitted courses in whenever he could. He teases me, saying—"We now have two college students—a senior and a sophomore!" Naturally, he's on the Dean's List. After all, he says he "never made below a B in his life," and why should details like leaving for work at 5:45 a.m. and then going to class from 7 to 10 p.m. stop him now?

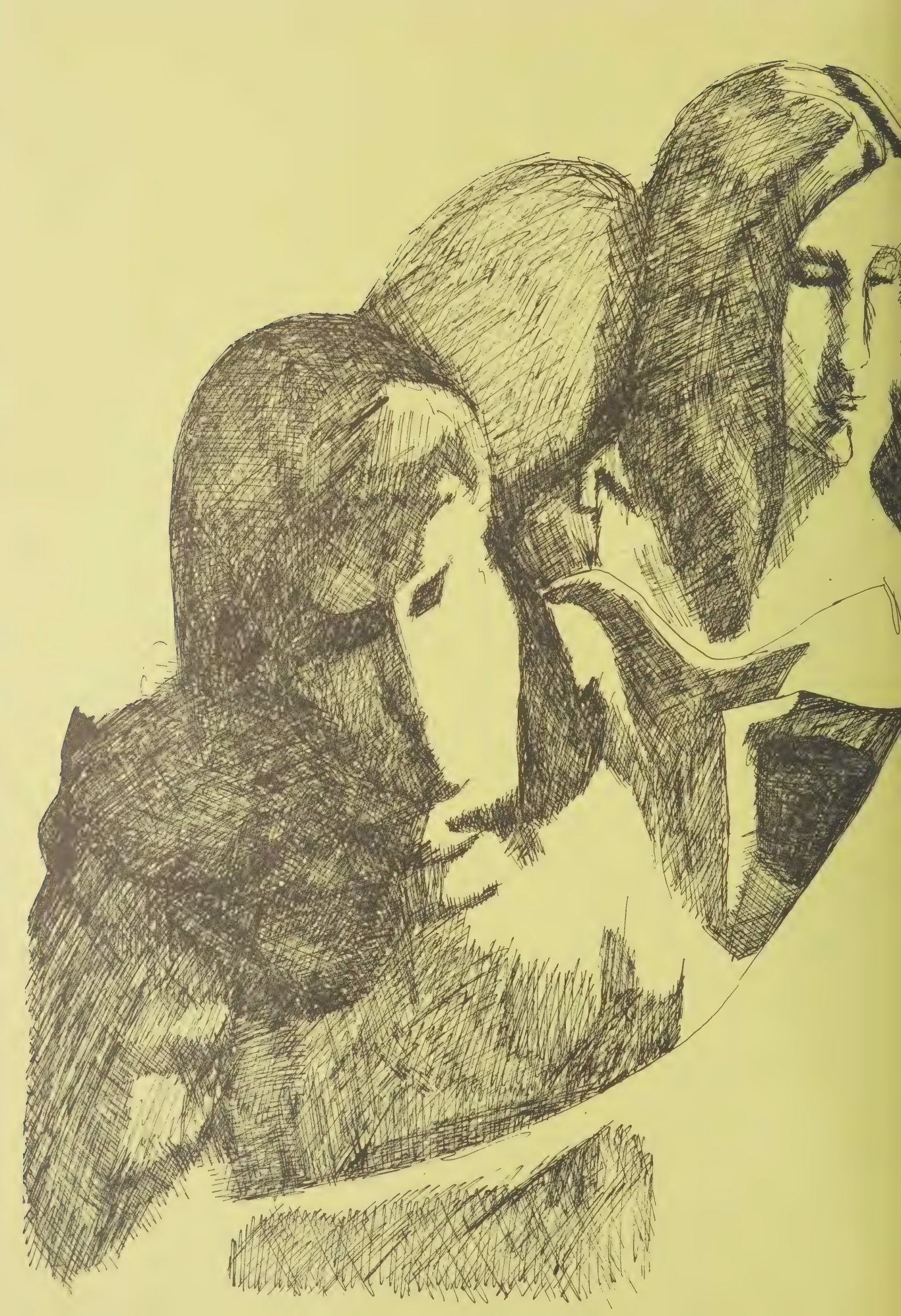
In his letters, he often sends me essays from his expository writing class to criticize for him, so he can compare our viewpoints. Speaking of his letters, they are among my most prized possessions. Each is scattered with his homemade proverbial quips, and advice that I will cherish forever.—"Thinking straight, and good expression, are two very important things and coupled with a good sense of moral values and standards, will let you go far in life;" —"Don't try to exist on short orders; you need a balanced diet to aid not only your physical well-being but your mental gymnastic ability." They are sometimes moralistic, sometimes healthful, but always straight from the heart. In his most recent letter, he tells me of his latest "project" innovation—"The thought occurred to me, why don't we team up as a photo-journalist team—I will do the photography and you can do the script—put together a couple of projects and send them in to various magazines? Let's see how many rejection slips we can garner!"

"Yes, the calendar really romps," as he would say, and Colonel Beck is forty-six years old now. His six-foot stature carries a man with many faces—faces which I shall never forget:—the stern, proud face when the Spanish government gave him the LEGION OF MERIT, after his accomplishments in Spain; the slyly cocky face as he seriously tells of the rare "Paris-Night-Riding-Glider Dog" he once saw on a moonless night in France; the tense and preoccupied face which bombastically speaks into his "hot line" to the Pentagon; the relaxed somber face, as he pulls away in his MG, the "Blue Max"—and even the impatiently distressed face as he sends back his favorite Chinese dinner because the vegetables are soggy. But the best face of all is the one with grey-green crinkled eyes peering at me over an oxygen mask in the cockpit of a B-52—a photograph signed—"Love, from The Ole Pilot."

Tristesse Sur L'Absence Du Professeur

Nous perdons le bon professeur,
Et une classe, et le peur
D'être mal compris —
Car le professeur
N'est pas ici.
Quand même nous avons douleur
Sur l'absence du professeur.
Mais moi, j'aurais
Plus de douleur
S'il revendra!

ELIZABETH ANN KERR



Riddle

Faces learn from mirrors and other faces
that project, not quite validly,
the backwards bliss of being
individual. Patterns named profundities
penetrate the most unique absurdities
like answering questions and seeing . .
    There are always the answers
of other voices, easily convertible
to signs and symbols and rightly applicable
to the most predictable
predicament. There are other eyes
that impose their sight on my visions
and that make my decisions
mine.
    There are always others . . .

ELIZABETH EARLE

The Cool Ones

ELIZABETH ANN KERR

This is a teen age luv story. It is unlike many such stories in that it has a happy ending, is warm, tender and semi-mental.

"Hi, Betty kid!" The words spurted forth from his pursed lips like the roar of the pounding ocean on the sands—which means he waved to her as he spoke.

"Hi, Lee kid," she returned, throwing a bucket of water on him, meaning he was all wet from the start. "Where do we go tonight?"

"Tonight, Betty kid, we go for a dance."

"Zounds like fun, hun," she rhymed. "I've always been wanted to go to a dance, Lee kid."

"Well, Betty kid, tonight we go, ho ho, ho ho!" he rhymed back.

"Say Lee kid, let's squid the 'kid' bit, okay? It's sounding to begin weirdo."

"Yea, just plain old Betty body, I'll cool it off for a whilst. I will, no kidding."

Shortly thereafter, they arrived at the dance, and began to make gyrotic gesticulations in time to the music. It was all very exciting for Lee, because he liked Betty; but it was all very boring for Betty because she thought Lee was frog, symbolizing her desire that some day he would croak.

"Say, Betty," Lee softly burped into her ear while they were dancing close together, "see that couple dancing in the corner? I think they are Arabs."

"Why?" Betty breathed back.

"Because they're dancing sheik to sheik!"

"Gee, but you're funny," Betty returned, but Lee knew she didn't mean it because there was a sarcastic toad in her voice.

The music stopped, so Lee and Betty sat down on some chairs,

which is as good a place as any to sit. Soon a lithe figure breathed by, whispering, "Lollipops, anyone? Lollipops? I have three lollipops to give away."

"That's odd," Lee remarked.

"What's odd? ?" Betty inquired.

"The number of lollipops," Lee said with a grin.

"Ha," Betty snorted, for by now she had grown very tired of Lee's jokes.

Then another boy, the same age as Lee, approached Betty, and said very politely, "May I please have the next dance with you?" Betty of course accepted, for this boy was really rather handsome, tall and dark and rich.

Betty and the boy, whose name, incidentally, was Clint, danced very close together, even though the music was fast, and soon they decided to fall in love.

Meanwhile, Lee was quite turned by the shake of events, so he went to a crystal clear pool nearby to make a few reflections. As he did, though, the Lollipop Lady passed by him whispering, "Lollipops, lollipops, three lollipops for sale!" It was then that Lee decided he wanted to go back to Betty, and take her away from Clint. However, Clint and Betty were very much interested in each other by now, and paid no attention to Lee when he asked to cut in. Lee, angered at this, tapped harder on Clint's shoulder—still to no avail. Quickly, Lee changed his plan of attack, and tapped very hard on Betty's shoulder, causing one of the straps on her dress to slip.

"Ouch, eeek!" she screamed in that order. "What do you want, Lee?"

"I want you, that's what I want. Can't you see that I'm mad about you? I love you!" he bellowed.

"Oh pshaw, man, be gone. Can't you see that we're busy?" Clint offered.

"No, I won't be gone."

"Well, there's more than one way to skin a cad," Clint said, and he began to unbutton his jacket. However, at this point, the Lollipop Lady floated by, and Clint, using raw courage, leaped into action. "Wait!" he yelled, and the Lollipop Lady screeched to a halt. "I'll buy one of your lollipops because lollipops give me energy."

Then Betty said, "I'll buy one because it will remind me of Lee—an all-day-sucker."

Then Lee said, "I'll buy one, but I won't eat it, symbolizing that not all suckers get licked." And grabbing the Lollipop Lady, he dashed away, making a happy ending to this story!

A Northern Story

MICHAEL MARGRETT

When Charlie Entwhistle, the football addict, married Mabel Hardwick, the TV recluse, everyone in Castleton thought he had, finally and decisively, gone raving mad. After all, he was seventy odd, and she wasn't any spring chicken. Besides, she didn't like football, a seemingly obvious prerequisite for marital bliss. But then, after the novelty of the event had worn off a little, people said that it was just like Charlie to do a thing like that anyway. For years he'd been the town enigma. No one knew where his money came from, though there was plenty of speculating; he certainly hadn't worked a day in his life. He lived by himself in a "niceish" house (which meant out of sight of the mills, but still not in the country), and the only time you could be sure of seeing him was every evening in the *Black Swan* from nine till closing time. He always sat in the corner of the Public, slowly sipping his beer and thumbing through his usual sheaf of football papers.

Aye, he was a rare one all right. It wasn't to be wondered at, what he did. But Mabel too . . . she ought to have had more sense. So they said. At first anyway. But in the north, all things have to be assimilated, brought into line, so as to keep the peace. And by the

third week, opinion had it that Mabel and Charlie deserved each other. After all, she wasn't the most sociable of sorts, kept to herself as much as she could—cooped up with her TV mostly, the largest screen in the town, on account of her eyes.

Things were pretty quiet for a while after that. Charlie still came down to the pub, Mabel still kept aloof and gawped at her silly television games. Then, around August, two strange things happened—first, Charlie wasn't to be seen for two whole days; then, a van came to his house and took all of Mabel's things and Mabel back to her old home. And that night Charlie was back in his usual seat. Well, that did it—curiosity rose and rose till it just boiled over. One afternoon, outside the baker's, Mabel was subjected to a rigorous cross-examination. Why had she returned? Where was the rift? What would she do? The reply was as simple as it was astonishing. "It were all right till t'World Cup," she said. "But it were always on TV at the same time as my Bingo hour on t'other programme. It would never 'ave worked . . . But I know *him*," she added with a wistful little smile. "He'll be back for t'next Cup in four years. After all, I *'ave* got the largest screen in town!"

Haiku

Stillness has caught me
In the silence of itself
I yield . . . a leaf drops.

ELIZABETH DUNKEL EDWARDS

Charms

FRANCES EUBANKS

It isn't easy for an eight-year-old child to come up with a remedy for arthritis in a seventy-year-old grandmother, but Dorsey Alexander had become, for reasons of her own, inspired. It had all started one hot day on her way to her uncle's store to get some eggs. She was shortcutting up the wagon path, dodging sharp rocks and broken bottle glass that always washed down every time it rained. She liked taking the short cut. The countless brown crickets hidden in the tall sand-blown weeds always seemed to chorus more loudly when she passed by. The glistening sun made Dorsey begin to think of Indian Creek Bridge. Pansy, her grandmother's maid, had promised to take Dorsey fishing with her on Friday. Pansy would bring some long poles to the house, and that afternoon they'd be off to Indian Creek.

Coming out on the main road, Dorsey felt the cool black soil under her feet. Parked in the shade of a pecan tree was an old rusty tractor. She thought it looked hungry with its skinny rib-like joints showing. Walking towards Miss Mary's store, next to her uncle's, she tried to make out the distant letters painted on the side of the building. "Dry Goods," she was whispering to herself almost with satisfaction, when it came to her that Friday was the day she had to go home! She walked more slowly now, still holding the sweaty crunched-up dollar bill that she had for the eggs.

The screen door with the *Merita Bread* trademark carefully stenciled on it, slammed behind her. Her uncle came up from under the counter where he'd been unloading something and waved at her nonchalantly.

"Hi Pris, what's on your mind?"

Dorsey looked around the store, then said in a flat voice, "Grandma wants some eggs. She's makin' a pie. I can get them." She walked over to the egg basket.

"Okay," came the muffled answer, "be sure you pick out some big ones."

Dorsey went and got the eggs and put the money down beside some over-fragrant bananas. "Do you know what tomorrow is?" She turned around as she asked, so it would appear just like any other unimportant question.

"Friday," he answered—"busy day. Anything else Maud needs?" He emptied the change into her hand.

"Nope, don't guess so. Well, I better hurry back now. Bye!"

She walked out of the store thinking harder than ever. Who cared if she stayed around here, anyway? It was just her mother who was always so afraid that she'd make her grandmother tired. It was true that Grandma always tried to look after Dorsey, but she really didn't have to. Besides, she *liked* to show her how to do things like cooking the bacon and weeding the flower beds, and even one day how to make buttonholes. Grandma didn't really mind having her. Tears would have come to Dorsey's eyes, but she wouldn't let them. If only her grandmother didn't have that arthritis! Then, maybe her mother wouldn't always say Dorsey made things worse, and would have to come home. That's when she began thinking about charms and things like that.

She remembered how Estelle, her mother's maid, had explained to her about the rabbit's foot—how it kept the "haints" away when she walked home every evening past the cemetery. Estelle had also told her about how well the "lucky leafs" worked. They could really cure you if you got eight of them and then prayed all night for a sickness to leave. It had really worked, she'd said, because once her uncle had gotten in a terrible fight, and they all thought he'd die. But the preacher saved him, because he'd come and prayed for him the whole night, and he'd borrowed their Bible with eight "lucky leafs" in it, even if he didn't know they were there. Anyway, her uncle was up walking around the next week, as well as could be. When Dorsey asked Estelle why there had to be eight, Estelle raised her eyes a little and said, "Eight, honey? 'Cause eight's the savin' number. God saved Noah and all his family from the flood, and Noah with his sons and wives made eight, and that's the truth!"

By the time Dorsey had reached the back steps she knew what she was going to do. Peeking into her grandmother's room, she announced her return, but the electric fan was going and her grandmother wasn't looking. She was reading a book as she always did in the afternoons, stretched out across the bed and propped up against the wall with about five pillows to ease her back.

"I brought the eggs, Grandma! Anything else?" She was nearly shouting.

"No," came the voice from between the pillows and the book. Then

she offered to show Dorsey how to make the meringue, but Dorsey said she thought she'd just stay outside instead.

She wandered down the path a little way, then dropped to her knees in a damp spot where the clover seemed thickest. Tucked on a shady chair on the other side of the driveway, Benjamin, the big grey tabby, watched her through his lazily slanting eyes. The chinaberry in the middle of the yard swayed slightly in the afternoon air. Occasionally she heard a loud knock when a rotten pecan hit the garage roof and slid off, hitting the ground with a soft thud. After a while, she caught the odor of hot chocolate pie filling and heard the clatter of pans from the kitchen, but she kept hunting till she at last had five four-leaf clovers.

When she finally got up and went into the house, all was quiet except for the dripping faucet in the sink. The pie was on top of the stove, and the door to her grandmother's room, just off the kitchen, was closed. She tiptoed over the creaky linoleum floor toward the pantry. The warped pantry door was closed, but she carefully turned the loose knob and gave it a jerk. The whole kitchen shook, even the meringue peaks on the beautiful pie. Dorsey stood still and listened intently in the direction of her grandmother's room. She held her breath, and was gratified to hear only the radio sounding out its urgent news.

She stepped into the pantry, lifted the stool out from under the bottom shelf and began to climb onto it, knees first, till she could stand up. Behind the mason jars on the top shelf, she saw the three old books. Her stomach felt a little too high up inside of her, and the sun streaming through the long tightly closed window was nearly blinding. Holding the squashed clovers in one hand, she grabbed onto a lower shelf with her free one, then reached up and began pushing the jars down the shelf, two at a time. The yellowed dust-covered dictionaries looked as if they'd fall apart at a touch, but last summer with Pansy's help, she'd pressed three other clovers between their pages. It hadn't been so important then.

The jars clinked against each other, but the noise didn't seem to carry in the small room crowded with market baskets, newspapers, and jars and cans. At last, she'd made a space big enough to get the books through. On tiptoe she got hold of the big one on top. She pulled it, and the stool began rocking violently on the slanting floor. Crash!

She opened her eyes and stared at the bits of scattered broken glass, then put the clovers down on a shelf and mechanically started crawling down. She heard her heart beating, and the dripping kitchen faucet seemed to mark time.

The springs of her grandmother's bed groaned loudly. Her door jerked open. "Dorsey!"

Dorsey stepped into the kitchen. "Grandma, I was looking . . ."

"What broke? What's happened?"

"The pantry—in there, some jars. I'll clean it up! I didn't think I'd hurt anything—I *didn't!*" Her grandmother turned to get a broom.

"Dorsey, run on outside now, before you cut yourself," she said in a tone too much resigned to the inevitable. Dorsey stood watching hesitantly a moment longer, wondering what she could do; sensing defeat.

It was getting late. As she pushed in her swing back and forth, the sand between her toes felt almost cold. The screen door slammed. She didn't look back, though she heard the footsteps.

"Dorsey—Dorsey!" Pansy's low voice insisted on recognition. She stood there with her usual load of things to take home, speaking softly and trying to be reassuring. She told Dorsey she'd be back again before she knew it, and it wouldn't be no time for them, either, before they'd be lookin' for her. And then, as if sensing Dorsey's disappointment about something else, she said, "And next time you comes, I'll take you to a place where the breams grow big as the basses. You hear me?"

Dorsey looked up and tried to smile. "Pansy, is that the truth?"

Pansy gave her that just-you-come-and-see look, patted her on the shoulder, and started walking on.

"Pansy! wait a minute! I've got something to ask you."

Pansy waited and Dorsey stopped and swallowed. "Pansy, do you believe in charms?—I mean really believe they *work*?" Pansy scowled a little, the way she always did when she had to think hard about something. She put her hands on her hips and looked down at the bare ground.

"Well . . . when we goes fishin' next time, I can ties a knot on your line that the fish thinks is better than bait!" She looked at Dorsey to see how she liked that idea. Dorsey's eyes lit up.

"Oh, Pansy, *can* you?"

Pansy shook her head up and down, slowly, emphatically.

Joe

When the sound of simple words
merged into faces,
and colors
reminded him of feelings,
he rose up from the booth
where he'd been selling
merry-go-round tickets
for eight months,
and walked
away from the carnival
of twisted bodies and twirling rides
and fifty percent breaded hot dogs;
past the "hiyajoe"
of the girliest girlie
whose face didn't matter
now, not that it ever had;
across the night
into the quiet sterility
near the race track stable
to have a smoke
and let the words
and colors smother him
as he lay in the grass.

SUE RUPPRECHT

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